

roll in like a heat wave by krelboyne

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Summary:

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Maybe it's the sunglasses he's wearing, or the half-smoked cigarette tucked behind his ear.

'Hey, sailor,' Billy's by the counter already, pushing his shades up into his curls.

roll in like a heat wave

Author's Note:

Day 4. Roller Skates.

steve is already working at Scoops in the spring so I could make this idea work, shh

It's a hot day, for spring.

One of those sweltering, out-of-place, days. The weather's giving the people of Hawkins' a little taste of summer, several months too early.

Steve's in the best place for it.

And, he never thought he'd be thinking that *Scoops* would be the *best* place for *anything*, but it's cooler in here. Has an actual walk-in freezer too, and Steve and Robin have been taking turns, sliding in amongst the unpacked and half-unpacked deliveries that they should be working on.

That's where Robin is now, presumably, chilling out - literally - in the freezer, pretending to work, while Steve's behind the counter, also pretending to work, but actually just helping himself to spoonful's of toppings. It's a surprisingly slow day, considering the weather, but it's caught everybody off guard. A nice day, after too much grey sky and rain. Besides, the customers they do get aren't really sticking around inside, but are preferring to take their ice cream outside. Enjoying the sun, while they have it.

Steve's licking a stray sprinkle from the corner of his mouth when the unmistakable sound of - *roller skates?* - grabs his attention. Wheels on Scoops' hard floor.

When he snaps his head up, Billy Hargrove's rolling into the store, looking like a slice of summer.

The guy's wearing a fucking *crop and shorts*, as though it's the middle of July, showing skin. Lots of skin. All golden and shimmering, like he has a fresh tan or something. Looks like the couple hours of

sunshine has polished him up. He's looking fresh from Cali, like he's only been in Hawkins for a matter of days. That's the thing about Hargrove: he could live in this town for years, and years, and years - like everybody else - and still look brand new. Still betray the fact that he doesn't belong here. Belongs to sunshine and sand and ocean waves, instead.

It's a sight, honestly. And, Steve doesn't want to say it's an *impressive* sight, but. It sort of *is*. Billy makes it look *cool*, somehow. Makes shorts and roller skates look *badass*.

Maybe it's the sunglasses he's wearing, or the half-smoked cigarette tucked behind his ear.

'Hey, sailor,' Billy's by the counter already, pushing his shades up into his curls, and how the hell did that happen?

Steve just rolls his eyes, says, 'What's up, Hargrove? What can I get you?'

The thing is, talking to Billy after everything that happened at the Byers' house is still sort of new. Steve didn't quite get an apology, but something not too far from. An acknowledgment, maybe. Billy telling him, *shouldn't've done that, man. Was having a bad day, y'know?*

As though having a bad day justifies beating the hell out of someone's face, but.

It's probably the best Steve can hope for from Billy, and. Honestly, it's *fine*. It all happened a while back, and Steve's over it. Water under the bridge and all that shit. It's not his first beating. Not his first black eye and busted lip. Steve just wants *peace*.

'What would you recommend?' Billy asks, just to be a dick, probably. Like Steve has time to go through the whole menu.

But, actually. He does have the time. Because Billy's the only customer. Is taking up space in front of the counter like he belongs here; arms stretched the length of it, and fingers gripping the edge.

'I dunno, man.' Steve's heart isn't in it. He's already wondering where this will go. Has the sneaking suspicion that, no matter what he

recommends, Hargrove won't be happy. He'll kick up some sort of fuss, just to be difficult. Just to make Steve put some actual work in today. 'What kind of dessert are you after?'

'I'm a simple guy,' Billy's saying, and Steve thinks, *nope, not true*. 'Just a regular cone. Which flavour's best?'

Steve holds his arms out, just a little exasperated. 'What? You want me to choose for you?'

'I want some recommendations, Harrington. If I'm not asking too much of you. I know you have your hands full.' The bastard looks around the empty store, just to make a point.

Somehow, Steve suppresses the groan that really wants to climb out of his throat and, instead, he comes out with, 'The chocolate and praline is good. Raspberry ripple. Coconut? I don't know what you like.'

'The sweeter, the better.' And. He does that thing he always does. That ridiculous habit, or. Something. Where he runs his tongue across his teeth like he's gearing up to eat Steve whole.

Steve wonders if Billy does that a lot, in general, or if he's the only one who gets to see it.

Whatever the answer is to that, Steve just narrows his eyes, not taking Billy on, because it's really the only way to handle him. 'The butterscotch is pretty sweet. And, obviously, there's the toppings, too.'

Billy makes this contemplative sound. Something low and throaty, and it *doesn't* send some curious shiver up Steve's spine. Doesn't feel like he's just stepped into the walk-in freezer.

He's tapping the counter, fingertips drumming away and, although Steve can appreciate just how monumental the task of choosing an ice cream flavour is, he wants to swat that damn hand away and just, like. *Throw* some ice cream at Hargrove and politely ask him to leave.

Instead, Steve finds himself saying, 'We do samples. If you wanna

try.'

Billy points an eyebrow up to the ceiling, looks like he's silently saying, *not a bad idea*, but eventually, he responds with, 'Nah. I'll just take your word for it, sailor.'

'Don't call me that.'

Hargrove smiles. Such a dick.

'What's the saying?' Billy puts on a bit of a show, eyebrows all knotted up, like he's thinking real hard. 'Oh, that's it. The customer's always right?'

Steve smiles back, matches Billy's, but adds something a little sharper. A little bit of a *fuck you* to the tilt of his mouth. Asks, 'You ordering something, or what?'

'I'll take the butterscotch.'

'Coming up.'

Steve's almost forgotten about the roller skates, until Billy moves away from the counter. Rolls back, nice and smooth. Perfectly balanced. Puts some distance between them, but only so he can get a better look at what Steve's doing, apparently.

He isn't sure why he feels an abundance of fucking pressure to get it right. Probably something to do with those eyes of Hargrove's. Too sharp and piercing. Too ready to pounce. Steve tries to shoot him a look, but. Ends up glancing down, because Billy's eyes are a shocking shade of blue. Almost looks like there's some green in there. And, Steve's never seen the ocean, but, he thinks it might look something like that.

When he drags his eyes away from Billy's, he finds no relief, because he's looking at his shoulders, instead. Filling out the top of the crop. Looking at his stomach that's on show. Tan and lean and smooth, and. Christ. Steve's staring, and when he shifts his gaze back to Billy's face, the fucker is grinning, like he knows something Steve doesn't.

Steve turns his attention to the ice cream, fast.

Tries to get his shit together while he scoops butterscotch into a waffle cone. Tries to ignore the heat of Billy's eyes. Feels like he's brought the sun into the mall with him.

'Uh. Toppings.' Steve, reluctantly, looks back to Billy, ice cream cone in his hand. 'What toppings?'

'What you got?'

'The butterscotch sauce is good. There's chocolate sauce, too. Or. Toffee.'

'Butterscotch.'

Steve drizzles the sauce over the ice cream, Billy watching the whole time, and he's half expecting to hear, *you've missed a spot*.

Billy just says, 'I'll have sprinkles, too.'

The sweeter, the better, Steve thinks. Thinks that it's kind of ironic, since Billy's far from sweet.

Even if he *smells* sweet. Like sun lotion. And sunrays. And whatever shit he's got in his hair to keep those curls perfect and in place.

Even if he looks a little sweet. Skin shimmering, like all it needed was a little bit of sun. Shiny. Glazed with sweat from the heat outside. Glittering stomach, and arms. Legs.

Fuck.

Steve's probably having a meltdown, or something. Probably just the heat getting to him. Even though, technically, he hasn't really been exposed to much of it today. Not properly.

Billy Hargrove is not sweet. And. If he *was*, it would be the kind of sweet that's followed up by a toothache.

'Looks tasty, Harrington.' Billy's already reaching across the counter, and Steve has to blink himself back into the present before he can hand it over.

Comes back to his senses, finally, and Billy's already lifting the cone to his mouth. Nearly gets a taste, before Steve cuts in with the price he owes.

'Oh.' It's all Billy says for a second, eyes on Steve, as though he doesn't quite get something.

'Oh?' Steve prompts, and his uniform feels tight. Skin warm and itchy.

'I gotta pay?'

Steve laughs. It's more aghast than it is amused, and he's sort of kicking himself for not expecting this. 'That's how it works, man.'

'Right, right. I just assumed, y'know. Since we're buddies now.'

Steve laughs again, even more disbelieving this time, and Billy doesn't look fazed. 'Sorry. Didn't get that memo.'

Billy smiles like a shark. 'Ah, c'mon, Harrington. Thought we're good now.'

'Sure, we're good.' Steve lies. Maybe. Maybe they are good. He isn't sure. Isn't sure what Billy wants with him. 'Just didn't realise we're buddy-level.'

'Well,' Billy says, slowly, bringing the ice cream to his mouth. 'Now you know.' He takes his first lick. Makes a stupid sound like he's savouring it; like it's the best thing he's ever tasted. Swirls his tongue around the damn thing and Steve's hypnotised. Feels heat crawling up his neck and spreading colour into his cheeks. 'Damn, sailor. This is good.'

'Yeah,' Steve manages, only sounding slightly stupid. 'The money? Please?' He's holding his hand out, waiting.

'It's missing something, though.'

Steve forgets about the money. For now. Narrows his eyes when he asks, 'What's that?'

'Cherry.'

Hargrove is smirking, and Steve is helpless. 'You didn't mention it, but.' He plucks one of the maraschino cherries from the tub. Does the honour of reaching over and sticking it on the top of the ice cream.

'That's better,' Billy quips. 'Gotta love a good cherry on top.' He smirks, eyes dark, and.

Steve tries to ignore the words that sound a little too much like some kind of innuendo. 'Good. Great. Ready to pay now?'

Billy shrugs, lets his smirk drop into something less impressed. Something almost. Sulky. Before his tongue is out again, sliding along creamy butterscotch, and his eyes. His eyes are on Steve.

When he speaks again, his lower lip looks pinker. A little swollen from the cold ice cream. 'C'mon, Stevie. Do a friend a favour.'

Steve's shorts are not feeling smaller, tighter. Not at all.

Billy goes on. 'Thought there were no hard feelings.'

Steve scoffs. 'So, you beat the shit out of me, *semi* apologise, and I give you free ice cream for the trouble?'

Hargrove just shrugs. Goes to work on the ice cream again. Tongue a little too - *wicked*. A little too *talented* at swirling up the cream without making a mess.

'I can't just give out freebies.' Steve's sighing, and also ignoring the fact that he *does* give out freebies. Too often. To Dustin, and the other nerds. But. That's beside the point.

'No?' Billy asks. 'Bet *you* get freebies all the time.'

'What? No.'

'You sure?' Billy grins like he's caught him out, somehow, and when Steve just quirks an eyebrow, he leans across the counter, leans right in. Hand coming up to Steve's face, and. He thumbs at the corner of Steve's mouth, leaving him beyond bewildered.

When Billy draws back, he holds his thumb out for Steve to view. A couple of rainbow sprinkles dotted there.

Steve is still too - baffled, by how close Hargrove had been, by the rough drag of his thumb at the corner of his lips, to answer straight away, and Billy just laughs. Says, 'Hey, I'm not judging. If I worked here, I'd be helping myself all the time.'

Then the reality of it all comes crashing back, even though Steve can still feel the brush of Billy's thumb. The reality of Billy, trying to get out of fucking paying. The reality of being caught out. Of, Christ. Embarrassment, because, have those sprinkles been there this whole time? Obviously, they have. Typical. So typical. Billy Hargrove can lap at ice cream like it's oxygen, and still not make a mess. Steve can't even shovel a couple of sprinkles into his mouth without making a fool of himself.

'I don't,' Steve starts pathetically, 'help myself all the time.'

Billy laughs again and he still has Steve's sprinkles on his thumb. 'What do you say? Gonna help a buddy out?'

At this point, Steve just wants Billy *gone*. Hates how he's burning up inside. Hates the infuriating, cock-twitching way Billy sucks up the ice cream. 'Fine, fine. Alright.' He runs a hand over his face, checks over his shoulder, just to make sure that Robin is nowhere to be seen. 'Just this once, okay?'

Billy grins. Like he's won.

Steve says, 'I'm serious. This is a one-time thing.'

'Alright, sailor. You got my word.'

'Good.'

And, as though the rest of it isn't bad enough, Billy goes ahead and licks up the sprinkles from his thumb. The sprinkles, that he'd swiped up from Steve's lips. Sucks them right off, and says, 'I owe you one, pretty boy.'

Steve. Hasn't heard that in a while. He's left speechless, honestly, but.

Billy isn't sticking around.

He leaves Steve with one last show. Licks the ice cream again. Gets a little butterscotch sauce on his bottom lip this time, but catches it with his tongue.

Then Billy Hargrove is turning on his skates and rolling out of Scoops, taking all the sun with him.

Leaving Steve hot. Scolded.

Perplexed.

And just a little stiff in his shorts.

Author's Note:

so, this turned out less roller skates and more billy hargrove licking ice cream, but i think this counts??